

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 /046 W

-----101403Z 105831 /53

O R 101303Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4354

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 1120

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JM

SUBJECT: PNP OVERWHELMS OPPOSITION IN PARISH ELECTIONS

1. WITH SOME BALLOTS STILL BEING COUNTED, IT IS NOW CLEAR PNP HAS SCORED LOPSIDED VICTORY IN THE MARCH 8 PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, PNP HAS ALREADY WON OVER 200 OF THE 269 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SEATS CAPTURING ALL PARISH COUNCILS AND THE KINGSTON CORPORATE AREA. IN PRESS STATEMENT LATE MARCH 8, PRIME MINISTER MANLEY SAID RESULTS WERE "NATURALLY GRATIFYING" AND HE HAILED THE "REINFORCEMENT OF THE MANDATE GIVEN THE PNP IN THE DECEMBER 15 NATIONAL ELECTIONS."

2. VOTING WAS MARRED WITH THE STANDARD (FOR JAMAICA) VIOLENCE AND ALLEGATIONS OF FRAUD. ARMED MEN RAIDED AT LEAST THREE POLLING STATIONS FORCING PRESIDING OFFICERS TO SIGN BALLOTS AND STUFF BALLOT BOXES. BALLOTS WERE STOLEN FROM SOME STATIONS AND ONE PNP CANDIDATE WAS BEATEN AFTER HAVING ALLEGEDLY BEEN FOUND IN THE POSSESSION OF BALLOT BOXES. BOTH PARTIES ISSUED
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CHARGES OF BOGUS VOTING, INTIMIDATION, AND THEFT OF BALLOT BOXES.

3. ACCORDING TO POLL PRESIDING OFFICERS, VOTER TURNOUT WAS LOW, PROBABLY LESS THAN 50 PERCENT OF THOSE INCLUDED ON THE 1977 VOTERS LIST. THIS COMPARES UNFAVORABLY WITH THE 63 PERCENT WHO VOTED IN THE 1974

LOCAL ELECTIONS.

4. COMMENT: THE ECLECTION RESULTS ARE UNSURPRISING. THE JLP WAGED A NON-CAMPAIGN AND SEEMED NEVER TO HAVE FULLY RECOVERED FROM ITS DECEMBER NATIONAL ELECTION DEFEAT. NEVERTHELESS, THE DEVASTATING CONCLUSIVENESS OF THE JLP LOSS MAY WELL RAISE QUESTIONS OVER THE FUTURE OF PARTY LEADER SEAGA AND CALLS INTO QUESTION THE CONTINUED VIABILITY OF JAMAICA'S OPPOSITION PARTY.
GERARD

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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